

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Five

The Children's Work in the Homes and in the Neighborhoods

Scripture references: Acts 2:46; 5:42; 20:20; 1 Cor. 16:19; Acts 12:12; 1 Cor. 14:12; 1:2

I. The scriptural basis for the small groups and the home meetings is the expression *from house to house* in Acts 2:46 and 5:42; on the day of Pentecost, as soon as the church was raised up on the earth, it began to meet from house to house—2:41, 46; 5:42; 20:20; 1 Cor. 16:19:

- A. To gain the increase, we need to have the home meetings; we need to have meetings in the new believers' homes, in the homes of the ones we gain through our preaching of the gospel.
- B. To bring the meetings to the homes is the very heart of the God-ordained way; it is a great failure in the Lord's recovery if we cannot bring the meetings to the homes.
- C. To meet in the homes is organic; if we only have a meeting hall with a definite, regular schedule, this will bring the entire church into the "box" of organization and causes us to lose the organic ability—Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2.
- D. Meeting in the believers' homes is for all the members of Christ to function; in any big meeting it is hard for the saints to function, but in a small meeting with four or five, or two or three, even a small boy or girl could function—Acts 2:21, 46; 5:42; 12:12; Matt. 18:20.
- E. We have to realize that the way the Lord is taking is to build up His church in the believers' homes; once the church is built up in the homes, the homes will be transformed—1 Cor. 16:19; 14:12; 1:2:
 - 1. The children will be preserved from drifting along the current of the age; in the end, the family will become proper and normal.
 - 2. We can invite our relatives to the home meetings, and they will see the situation in our homes and will be touched to receive the Lord's salvation.

II. In a family the focus is not on teaching the children but is on raising them by cherishing, nourishing, and fostering them so that they may grow—1 Thes. 2:7; Col. 1:5-6; Eph. 4:15; cf. 2 Pet. 3:18:

- A. Their growth is not mainly in knowledge; it is primarily a growth in life; as children grow in life, they spontaneously receive more education—Col. 1:9; Eph. 4:13.
- B. Concerning this matter, we in the Lord's recovery must have a change in our concept; do not think that in the recovery we regard work higher than life; no, we need to concentrate on life—John 17:3; 1 John 5:20.
- C. To nurture children means to bring them up, to raise them, by nourishing them; raising children requires that the parents give them the needed instruction related to human life, family life, and social life—Eph. 6:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:4.
- D. For proper human living in your home, you must teach your children to behave properly; do not say that ethical teachings are apart from Christ and therefore worthless—v. 4; Col. 1:28.

III. We need to open up our home, we do not need to meet with others first; we can initiate our home meeting by meeting with our family members—Acts 5:42; 2:46; 12:12:

- A. To set up a meeting will stir up our heart and will fan the flame in our heart and in our spirit; first of all, we will be burned, and then our family will be burned; to set up a home meeting will keep out many evil things from our homes—2 Tim. 1:6a; Psa. 84:11.
- B. The meetings in the believers' homes can be a fruitful testimony to the neighbors around, and they provide an opportunity for witness and gospel preaching—John 19:35; 3 John 12; Acts 5:42:
 - 1. Many who are not willing to go to a “church” will be glad to go to a private house—
v. 42.
 - 2. The influence is most helpful for the families of the Christians; from early days the children will be surrounded by a spiritual atmosphere, and will have constant opportunity to see the reality of eternal things—John 14:17.

IV. In our neighborhood there must be a children's meeting that should not be considered as the children's meeting of the church; this is a children's meeting work in the saints' neighborhood:

- A. Through the children many homes will be opened for the church to evangelize; this is the community work; these are the warm doors and the parents will welcome us—Rom. 16:10-11; 1 Cor. 16:15:
 - 1. Although people today are occupied by many things and it seems as if they are not open to the gospel, the best way to overcome this is to have a children's meeting in our own home.
 - 2. Many times parents are saved through their children, so do not overlook the children's work.
- B. Every household should preach the gospel; it is very meaningful when the whole family rises up and preaches the gospel.
- C. After the children get home from school, the elderly saints may open their home and prepare some snacks to welcome them; then they can sing with the children, tell them stories, and lead them to know God—2 Kings 4:42-44.
- D. Gaining people in this way is very safe, because they are taught by us and receive the gospel from us from their youth; thus, they should be very solid—1 Tim. 4:12; Luke 18:21.